THE PRINCESS ELOPES

By HAROLD MacGRATH

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SYNOPSIS.

Arthur Warrington, American consul to Barscheit, tells how reigning Grand Duke attempts to force his neice, Princess Hildegarde, to marry Prince Dopplekinn, an old widower. Warrington does not know the princess even by sight. While riding horseback in the country night overtakes him and he seeks accommodations in a dilapidated castle. Here he finds two women and an old man servant. One woman is Princess Hildegarde and the other a friend, Hon. Betty Moore, of England. They detain him to witness a mock marriage between the princess and a disgraced army officer, Steinbock, done for the purpose of foiling the grand duke. Steinbock attempts to kiss the princess and she is rescued by Warrington. Steinbock disappears for good. Max Scharfenstein, an old American friend of Warrington's reaches Barscheit. Warrington tells him of the princess. Scharfenstein shows Warrington a locket with a picture of a woman inside. It was on his neck when he, as a boy, was picked up and adopted by his foster father, whose name he was given. He believes it to be a picture of his mother. The grand duke announces to the princess that she is to marry Dopplekinn the following week. During a morning's ride she plans to escape. She meets Scharfenstein. He finds a purse she has dropped but does not discover her identity.

CHAPTER VII.

"The one fault I have to find with European life is the poor quality of tobacco used."

It was eight o'clock, Thursday night, the night of the dinner at Muller's. I was dressing when Max entered, with a miserable cheroot between his teeth.

"They say," he went on, "that in Russia they drink the finest tea in the world, simply because it is brought overland and not by sea. Unfortunately, tobacco—we Americans recognize no leaf as tobacco unless it comes from Cuba—has to cross the sea, and is, in some unaccountable manner, weakened in the transit. There are worse cigars in Germany than in France, and I wouldn't have believed it possible, if I had not gone to the trouble of proving it. Fine country! For a week I've been trying to smoke the German quality of the weed, as a preventive, but I see I must give it up on account of my throat. My boy, I have news for you,"—tossing the cheroot into the grate.

"Fire away," said I, struggling with a collar.

"I have a box of Havanas over at the custom house that I forgot to bail out."

"No!" said I joyfully. A Havana, and one of Scharfenstein's!

"I've an idea that they would go well with the dinner. So, if you don't mind, I'll trot over and get 'em."

"Be sure and get around to Muller's at half-past eight, then," said I.

"I'll be there." He knew where to find the place.

Muller's rathskeller was the rendezvous of students, officers and all those persons of quality who liked music with their meat. The place was low-ceilinged, but roomy, and the ventilation was excellent, considering. The smoke never got so thick that one couldn't see the way to the door when the students started in "to clean up the place," to use the happy idiom of mine own country. There were marble tables and floors and arches and light, cane-bottomed chairs from Kohn's. It was at once Bohemian and cosmopolitan, and, once inside, it was easy to imagine oneself in Vienna. A Hungarian orchestra occupied an inclosed platform, and every night the wail of the violin and the pom-pom of the wool-tipped hammers on the Hungarian "piano" might be heard.

It was essentially a man's place of entertainment; few women ever had the courage or the inclination to enter. In America it would have been the fashion; but in the capital of Barscheit the women ate in the restaurant above, which was attached to the hotel, and depended upon the Volksgarten band for their evening's diversion.

You had to order your table hours ahead—that is, if you were a civilian. If you were lucky enough to be an officer, you were privileged to take any vacant chair you saw. But heaven aid you if you attempted to do this not being an officer! In Barscheit there were also many unwritten laws, and you were obliged to observe these with all the fidelity and attention that you gave to the enameled signs. Only the military had the right to request the orchestra to repeat a piece of music. Sometimes the lieutenants, seized with that gay humor known only to cubs, would force the orchestra in Muller's to play the Hungarian war song till the ears cried out in pain. This was always the case when any Austrians happened to be present. But ordinarily the crowds were good-natured, boisterous, but orderly.

It was here, then, that I had arranged to give my little dinner. The orchestra had agreed—for a liberal tip—to play "The Star-spangled Banner," and there was a case of Doppelkinn's sparkling Moselle. I may as well state right here that we neither heard our national anthem nor drank the vintage. You will soon learn why. I can laugh now, I can treat the whole affair with becoming levity, but at the time I gained several extra gray hairs.

If the princess hadn't turned around and if Max hadn't wanted that box of Havanas!

When I arrived at Muller's I found my boys in a merry mood. They were singing softly from "Robin Hood" with fine college harmony, and as I entered they swarmed about me like so many young dogs. Truth to tell, none of them was under 20, and two or three were older than myself. But to them I represented official protection for whatever they might do. I assumed all the dignity I dared. I had kept Scharfenstein's name back as a surprise.

Ellis—for whom I had the passports—immediately struck me as being so nearly like Max that they might easily have been brothers. Ellis was slighter; that was all the difference. I gave him his papers and examined his tickets. All was well; barring accidents, he would be in Dresden the next day.

"You go through Doppelkinn, then?" said I.

"Yes. I have friends in Dresden whom I wish to see before going home"

"Well, good luck to you!"

Then I announced that Max Scharfenstein, an old college comrade, would join us presently. This was greeted with hurrahs. At that time there wasn't an American student who did not recollect Max's great run from the ten-yard line. (But where the deuce was Max?) I took a little flag from my pocket and stuck it into the vase of poppies, and the boys clapped their hands. You never realize how beautiful your flag is till you see it in a foreign land. I apologized for Max's absence, explaining the cause, and ordered dinner to be served. We hadn't much time, as Ellis' train departed at ten. It was now a quarter of nine.

We had come to the relishes when a party of four officers took the table nearest us. They hung up their sabers on the wall-pegs, and sat down, ordering a bottle of light wine. Usually there were five chairs to the table, but even if only two were being used no one had the right to withdraw one of the vacant chairs without the most elaborate apologies. This is the law of courtesy in Barscheit. In America it is different; if you see anything you want, take it.

Presently one of the officers—I knew none of them save by sight—rose and approached. He touched the flag insolently and inquired what right it had in a public restaurant in Barscheit. Ordinarily his question would not have been put without some justification. But he knew very well who I was and what my rights were in this instance.

"Herr Lieutenant," said I coldly, though my cheeks were warm enough, "I represent that flag in this country, and I am accredited with certain privileges, as doubtless you are aware. You will do me the courtesy of returning to your own table." I bowed.

He glared at me for a brief period, then turned on his heel. This was the first act in the play. At the fellow's table sat Lieut. von Storer, Doppelkinn's nephew and heir-presumptive. He was, to speak plainly, a rake, a spendthrift and wholly untrustworthy. He was not ill-looking, however.

My spirits floated between anger and the fear that the officers might ruin the dinner—which they eventually did.

Things went on smoothly for a time. The orchestra was pom-pomming the popular airs from "Faust." (Where the deuce was that tow-headed Dutchman?) Laughter rose and fell; the clinkle of glass was heard; voices called. And then Max came in, looking as cool as you please, though I could read by his heaving chest that he had been sprinting up back streets. The boys crowded around him, and there was much ado over the laggard.

Unfortunately the waiter had forgotten to bring a chair for his plate. With a genial smile on his face, Max innocently stepped over to the officers' table and plucked forth the vacant chair. For a wonder the officers appeared to give this action no heed, and I was secretly gratified. It was something to be a consul, after all. But I counted my chickens too early.

"Where are the cigars?" I asked as Max sat down complacently.

"Cigars?"—blankly. "Hang me, I've clean forgotten them!" And then, obliv-ious of the probable storm that was at that moment gathering for a downpour over his luckless head, he told us the reason of his delay.

"There was a crowd around the palace," he began. "It seems that the Princess Hildegarde has run away, and they believe that she has ridden toward the Pass in a closed carriage. The police are at this very moment scouring the country in that direction. She has eloped."

"Eloped?" we all cried, being more or less familiar with the state of affairs at the palace.

"Good-by to Doppelkinn's frau!"

"Good girl!"

"She has been missing since seven o'clock, when she drove away on the pretense of visiting her father's old steward, who is ill," went on Max, feeling the importance of his news. "They traced her there. From the steward's the carriage was driven south, and that's the last seen of her. There won't be any wedding at the cathedral next Tuesday,"—laughing.

Queries and answers were going

"He Tranquilly Pulled Out a Murderous-Looking Colt and Laid It Beside His Plate."

crisscross over the table, when I observed with dread that Lieut. von Storer had risen and was coming our way. He stopped at Max's side. Max looked up to receive Von Storer's glove full on the cheek. It was no gentle stroke. Von Storer at once returned to his table and sat down.

For a moment we were all absolutely without power of motion or of speech, Max's face grew as white as the table-cloth, and the print of the glove glowed red against the white. I was horrified, for I knew his tremendous strength. If he showed fight, Von Storer would calmly saber him. It was the custom. But Max surprised I have spoken.

Max returned the revolver to his hip-pocket and gave vent to an Homeric laugh.

"You tow-headed Dutchman!" I cried, when I found voice for my words, "what have you done?"

"Done? Why, it looks as if we had all the downs this half," he replied smartly. "Oh, the gun isn't loaded."—confidentially.

Ellis fumbled in his pocket and produced his passports and tickets. These he shoved over to Max.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Joke That Two Could Play.

Farmer Evened Up Accounts with Young Would-Be Wit.

Young Stevenson was on his way north to spend the week end with his parents, and felt in a particularly jovial mood. The train in which he was traveling had stopped at a small village. As a farmer who was sauntering up and down the platform came opposite Stevens's compartment he was asked by the youth if he knew that the Duke of Devonshire was on the train. Immediately the man showed great interest, and said: "No! Is he?" "I think he is not," answered Stevens "I only asked you if you knew that he was." The farmer said nothing, but continued his walk on the platform. As he came opposite the window again he remarked that this town has been experiencing some excitement. "What is the matter?" asked Stevens. "The authorities wouldn't let some folks bury a woman," replied the farmer. "What was the reason for refusing?" "She wasn't dead," was the laconic reply. And then he strolled away, leaving young Stevens biting his lip.—Judge's Library.

Faith in one's cause is half the battle.

The Servant Problem In Cuba.

Cook Is In Sole Charge of the Domestic Cusine.

The Cuban matron has little to say in the management of her own household, as the family literally board with their cook, who has sole control of the cusine. When a cook is engaged she is paid so much per month—$10, $15 or $20, as the case may be—for her work. She at once inquires how much is allowed for the marketing, which she is to do each morning. On being told, she figures out how much she can save from the amount, and if the graft amount to say 15 or 20 cents per day, she is likely to accept the position. She rarely sleeps at the house, and usually has a family of her own who are fed from the larder of her employer. Early breakfast is light—fruit, rolls and coffee—and at noon there is a meal known as late breakfast, which resembles the American luncheon. When this is finished the cook spends a few hours at her home and returns at five o'clock in time to prepare dinner. A half-grown girl is employed to wait on the table, answer the door bell, etc. In some families male cooks are employed. If the meals do not suit the master of the house he adds more money to the marketing allowance.—Mrs. C. R. Miller, in Leslie's Weekly.